

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12 IO-13
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O R 171026Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2806
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 10869

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC TECH US IN
SUBJECT: NUCLEAR TOPICS: MEETING WITH PM'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY,
V. SHANKAR

REF; (A) STATE 174235; (B) NEW DELHI 10669; (C) NEW DELHI 10699

1. INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ON SAFEGUARDS. IN A MEETING LATE
FRIDAY, SHANKAR CONFIRMED THAT THE INDIAN AEC HAS CONSIDERED
AND APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE THE IDEA OF INDIA PROMOTING THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A HIGH LEVEL, INDEPENDENT COMMITTEE OF
SCIENTISTS TO EXAMIN SAFEGUARDS QUESTIONS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS.
THIS IDEA WAS FIRST PROPOSED BY PM DESAI TO PM CALLAGHAN IN
LONDON IN JUNE, AND THROUGH THEIR HIGH COMMISSIONER HERE THE
BRITISH HAVE RECENTLY GIVEN IT SOME FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT.
THE IDEA WAS ALSO DISCUSSED BUT NOT PROBED VERY DEEPLY IN
CONVERSATIONS IN THE USA BETWEEN SHANKAR AND NYE.

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2. ACCORDING TO SHANKAR, THE COMMITTEE'S MANDATE HAS NOT
YET BEEN FORMULATED IN ANY PRECISE WAY. GENERALLY THE
INDIANS HAVE IN MIND AN EXAMINATION AND RESULTANT PRO-
POSALS DIRECTED AT "MEASURES NECESSARY TO PREVENT NUCLEAR
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ALONG PEACEFUL LINES BEING
SWTICED TO SERVE MILITARY PURPOSES." SHANKAR SEES THIS
AS INCLUDING BUT NOT BEING LIMITED TO THE TASKS LAID DOWN

IN THE NON-PAPER NYE GAVE HIM ON THIS SUBJECT IN WASHINGTON. BUT INDIA WOULD PREFER THE COMMITTEE'S CHARGE TO BE BROADER THAN A CONSIDERATION OF THE PROBLEMS POSED TO OR BY INDIA ALONE. IT HOPES THE COMMITTEE CAN SOMEHOW FIND BOTH "UNIVERSALIZED SOLUTIONS" AND ONES THAT WILL NOT REQUIRE USE OF "THE HATED PHRASE, FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS". AT THE SAME TIME INDIA HOPES THAT THIS INITIATIVE (WHEN LAUNCHED) WILL SHOW THAT IT TAKES SERIOUSLY THE NEED TO DEAL WITH THE DANGERS OF HORIZONTAL PROLIFERATION, AND IN THIS SPIRIT IT IS ALSO SEEN TO MEET AT LEAST PART WAY THE FIRST REQUIREMENT LAID DOWN BY THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE IN SENATOR SPARKMAN'S JUNE 21 LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER.

3. THE PROSPECTIVE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE HAS GROWN SINCE THE WASHINGTON TALKS. THE GOI NOW ENVISIONS A PANEL OF AS MANY AS SEVEN, INCLUDING IN ADDITION TO INDIA AND THE USA REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE UK, WEST GERMANY, FRANCE, JAPAN, AND EITHER BRAZIL OR ARGENTINA. THE MEMBERS ARE ENVISIONED AS "INDEPENDENT SCIENTISTS OF HIGH STANDING, NOMINATED BY THE GOVERNMENTS BUT NOT TIED TO THEM". NOT MUCH THOUGH SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN YET AS TO JUST HOW SUCH A COMMITTEE MIGHT BE PUT TOGETHER OR HOW IT WOULD BE EXPECTED TO FUNCTION.

4. THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH VEHICLE WILL PROBABLY BE A DESAI LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER, POSSIBLY WITH PARALLEL LETTERS
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TO PM CALLAGHAN AND CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT. SHANKAR RECOGNIZES THAT MUCH MORE THOUGHT NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO DEFINING THE COMMITTEE'S SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES. HE HOPES THAT ENOUGH OF THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO TO ENABLE A DRAFT LETTER TO BE PUT BEFORE PM DESAI WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS. (COMMENT: I HAVE POINTED OUT TO SHANKAR THAT HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMITTEE'S PURPOSE APPEARS TO BE POINTED AT FINDING SOME NEW, MINIMAL ANTI-PROFLIERATION ARRANGEMENTS AND THAT WE ARE UNLIKELY TO WANT TO TAKE PART IN ANYTHING THAT MIGHT SERVE TO UNDERCUT THE IAEA OR LEAD TO SOME SEPARATE NEW MONITORING SYSTEM. SHANKAR AGREED THOSE WOULD BE UNDESIRABLE RESULTS. HE THOUGHT THEY COULD BE AVOIDED AND AGREED THAT MORE ATTENTION NEEDED TO BE GIVEN BOTH TO THE RELATION OF THIS PLAN TO THE IAEA AND TO A MORE EXACT DEFINITION OF THE COMMITTEE'S MANDATE BEFORE ANY PUBLIC LAUNCHING. THERE ARE OBVIOUS DIFFICULTIES FOR US IN THE INDIAN PLAN AS CURRENTLY PHRASED; YET, THE FACT THAT THE GOI SEEMS TO BE ABOUT TO PUT FORWARD A (MORE OR LESS) CONCILIATORY NON-PROLIFERATION

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INITIATIVE SEEMS TO ME TO BE DISTINCTLY ENCOURAGING. WE PROBABLY SHOULD NOT TRY TO DO MORE TO SHAPE THE PROPOSAL AT THIS STAGE, BECAUSE THAT MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS TRYING TO TAKE THE PLAY AWAY FROM THEM, BUT WHEN THEY HAVE A FLESHED-OUT PROPOSAL TO OFFER, I TRUST THAT WE SHALL BE PREPARED TO COOPERATE TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.)

5. OTHER NUCLEAR TOPICS: OUR DISCUSSION RANGED OVER A WIDE AREA IN ADDITION TO THE FOREGOING. SPECIFIC NOTE-WORTHY ITEMS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) CTB; SHANKAR MADE CLEAR THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION OF INDIA SIGNING A CTB THAT IS "DISCRIMINATORY" OR "INCOMPLETE". HE CONFIRMED THAT INDIA WOULD ACCEPT ONE THAT HAD A LIMITED TERM OF LIFE AND ONE THAT DID NOT INITIALLY INCLUDE CHINA AND FRANCE, BUT NOT ONE WHICH PERMITTED CERTAIN LEVELS OF TESTING AND HENCE WAS "DISCRIMINATORY" IN FAVOR OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS POWERS.
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(B) ALLGED SOVIET OFFER: WHEN I QUERIED SHANKAR ABOUT

THE TIMES OF INDIA'S REPORT OF AN INFORMAL RUSSIAN OFFER TO REPLACE US AS A SUPPLIER TO TARAPUR (REF. NEW DELHI 10790), SHANKAR SAID EMPHAITICALLY THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO SUCH OFFER. HE ADDED THAT INDIA WOULD NEITHER SEEK NOR COUNTENANCE SUCH AN OFFER WHILE OUR CONTRACT REMAINED IN EFFECT.

(C) LIMITED TERM SAFEGUARDS: OUR PROPOSAL OF A LIMITED TIME PERIOD TRIAL WITH COMPREHENSIVE SAFEGUARDS IS A NON-STARTER SO FAR AS THE GOI IS CONCERNED.

(C) CIRCUS HEAVY WATER. SETHNA HAS TOLD THE INDIAN AEC THAT AMOUNTS EQUIVALENT TO THE US HEAVY WATER SUPPLIED TO THE CIRUS REACTER HAVE ALREADY BEEN TRANSFERRED TO RAJASTHAN AND PUT UNDER SAFEGARDS IN EARLIER TRANSFERS. I TOLDSHANKAR THAT AN AUTHORITIATIVE STATEMENT TO THIS EFFECT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN VIEW OF SENATOR GLENN'S PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THIS QUESTION AS RECORDED IN THE JUNE 21 SPARKMAN LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER.

(E) TARAPUR REPROCESSING: WHEREAS SETHNA HAD EARLIER TOLD COURTNEY THAT INDIA WOULD HAVE NO NEED TO REPROCESS TARAPUR'S SPENT FUEL FOR FIVE YEARS OR SO AND THAT HAD MADE BUY-BACK LOOK TO BE A PROMISING ANSWER TO THAT POTENTIAL PROBLEM (AT LEAST IN OUR PERSPECTIVE OUT HERE), SETHNA HAS NOW TOLD THE AEC THAT INDIA HAS NEEDS THAT CALL FOR RE-PROCESSING OF THIS SPENT FUEL TO BEGIN "AFTER 1981" -- I.E., IN 2-1/2 YEARS. CONSEQUENTLY SHANKAR BELIEVES, WITH REFERENCE TO THE FOURTH POINT IN THE JUNE 21 SPARKMAN TO PRESIDENT LETTER, THAT THE PM IS UNLIKELY TO APPROVE A US BUY-BACK OF THE SPENT FUEL AT TARAPUR IF WE HAVE TO TERMINATE SUPPLY THERE.

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(F) TARAPUR RERACKING COSTS. SETHNA HAS BEEN STILL GIVING THE AEC TO UNDERSTAND THAT RERACKING AT TARPUR TO MEET THE STORAGE PROBLEM WILL COST THE GAOI IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF \$3 MILLION. SHNAKR WAS SURPRISED AND UNBELIEIVING WHEN I SAID THAT FOR SOME TIME MY INFORMATION OF GE'S ESTIMATES OF THEIR COSTS HAD BEEN ABOUT HALF THAT AMOUNT, WHILE THE MOST RECENT GE ESTIMATE HAD INDICATED THAT THE JOB COULD PROBABLY BE DONE FOR UNDER \$1 MILLION. (APPARENTLY OURS IS NOT THE ONLY GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THERE IS SOMETIMES THAN COMPLETE CANDOR BETWEEN CERTAIN AGENCIES.)

6. US-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS AND THE THIRD WORLD. SHANKAR EXPRESSED CONCERN AND AT SOME LENGTH OVER HOW THE SOVIETS SEEM ALWAYS ABLE TO LAY THE BLAME ON US FOR RESISTING THEIR "PROGRESSIVE PROPOSALS" IN SUCH LONG DRAWN OUT

NEGOTIATIONS AS THE CTB, SALT II, AND THE INDIAN OCEAN TALKS. HENCE DELAYS IN BRINGING NEGOTIATIONS TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION SERIOUSLY WEAKEN OUR CREDIBILITY IN THE THIRD WORLD. HE FEELS THAT WE MAY NOT APPRECIATE HOW CONCERNED THE NON-ALIGNED ARE ABOUT THESE ISSUES. HE WOULD LIKE THE PRESIDENT TO SHARE MORE FULLY WITH THE PRIME MINISTER OBSTACLES THROWN UP BY THE RUSSIAN SIDE THAT MAY BE ACCOUNTING FOR SOME OF THESE DELAYS. HE BELIEVES THE PM IS SUFFICIENT A REALIST TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THE FACT WHEN SPECIFIC STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS LIMIT OUR CAPACITY TO BE AS FORTHCOMING IN NEGOTIATING WITH THE USSR AS WE MIGHT OTHERWISE WISH. AND SHANKAR BELIEVES THAT THE PRIME MINISTER, WHEN ARMED WITH SUCH KNOWLEDGE, CAN HELP TO ADVANCE OUR INTERESTS. "YOU SHOULD UTILIZE THE PM IN PERSUADING BREZHNEV", WAS HOW HE PUT IT. GOHEEN

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